



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART I. Purpose of and Need for Action

1. Project Title: Dillon Rifle and Pistol Club

2. Type of Proposed Action:

Range expansion and improvement project is to build, modify or expand former and new ranges, add a vault toilet and a new parking area, and to make all activity areas more handicapped accessible.

- 1000 yard range with spotter pits
- 500 meter High Power Silhouette Range
- High Power rifle range with 200, 300 and 600 yard capabilities
- Expanded pistol range of 50 yards or more, with 4+ target frames capable of Bullseye expansion.
- Black Powder target range with silhouette range potential
- Small bore outdoor range with 300 yard capability including a small bore 100 meter silhouette range.
- Trap shooting range
- Hunter Education field testing area
- An associated natural terrain parking area.

Proposed future expansion after 2011 is to build a new multi-purpose indoor range for air rifle, small bore rifle and archery, but is not funded in this cycle, and it will have to meet future funding cycle criteria.

3. Location Affected by Proposed Action: The Dillon Rifle and Pistol Club is approximately 6.3 miles northwest of Dillon, MT on property owned by Beaverhead County. The property is leased from Beaverhead County and the tract of land consists of 169.71 acres located in Section 7, Township 7 South, Range 9 West, M.P.M., Lots 1 and 2 and Section 12, Township 7 South, Range 10 West, E1/2NE1/4 M.P.M. (See figure 1)

4. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action: MCA87-1-276 through 87-1-279 (Legislative established policies and procedures for the establishment and improvement of shooting ranges) MCA87-2-105 (Departmental authority to expend funds to provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and safe hunting practices). The 2007 Montana Legislature has authorized funding for the establishment of a Shooting Range Development Program providing financial assistance for the development of shooting ranges for public purposes. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks has responsibility for the administration of the program, including the necessary guidelines and procedures governing applications for funding assistance under the program.

5. Need for the Action(s): The Dillon Rifle & Pistol Club has operated a range on leased BLM land for the last 40 years. This land was recently transferred from the BLM to Beaverhead County after the successful completion of an extensive EIS. The transfer included an additional 80 acres to expand the existing shooting range with a safety buffer zone and room for future expansion of the range. Also in 1995 the Dillon area also lost its indoor range and a very active junior club and small bore program leaving a void in the overall shooting sports programs. The new lease with the county will now allow for expansion of the current range which presently consists of 50 foot pistol range with 4 target frames, a 300 yard rifle range with 3 benches and single target frames at 25, 50, 100, 200 and 300 yards with marginal handicapped access into a range with the proposed improvements (see para 1). This will result in a range that will provide the public with a safe and secure area to site in firearms and to promote safe hunting and shooting practices. Additionally there is a need for a range to support sanctioned competitions, as well as the Montana National Guard Youth Challenge and Hunter Education Programs. This project will enhance the communities' ability to provide a safe secure shooting complex that will also serve as an educational area, in addition to providing handicapped access for the public.

6. Objectives for the Action(s): Provide additional shooting activities, handicapped access, improved range safety, and educational or instructional areas. This will include expanding the shooting range(s) and facilities to provide a variety of safe shooting opportunities. Providing improved league shooting opportunities and enhanced shooting education programs for Hunter Education, Bow Hunter Education, 4-H, Boy Scouts, etc. All design and construction objectives are to improve safety through separation of each type of range feature and their impact areas from other ranges. The overall objective, of the proposal, will be to expand the variety of shooting opportunities at the club while improving safety, handicapped accessibility, overall operation efficiency and utility on all the range(s). Overall design and layout for this 2008 proposal need to accommodate future expansion and specifically the 2011 programmed expansion, for construction of a multi-purpose indoor range for air rifle, small bore rifle and archery, which will also provide an indoor area for meetings, educational programs, workshops etc. and an area for safe secure storage of property.

7. Maps and Supporting Figures:

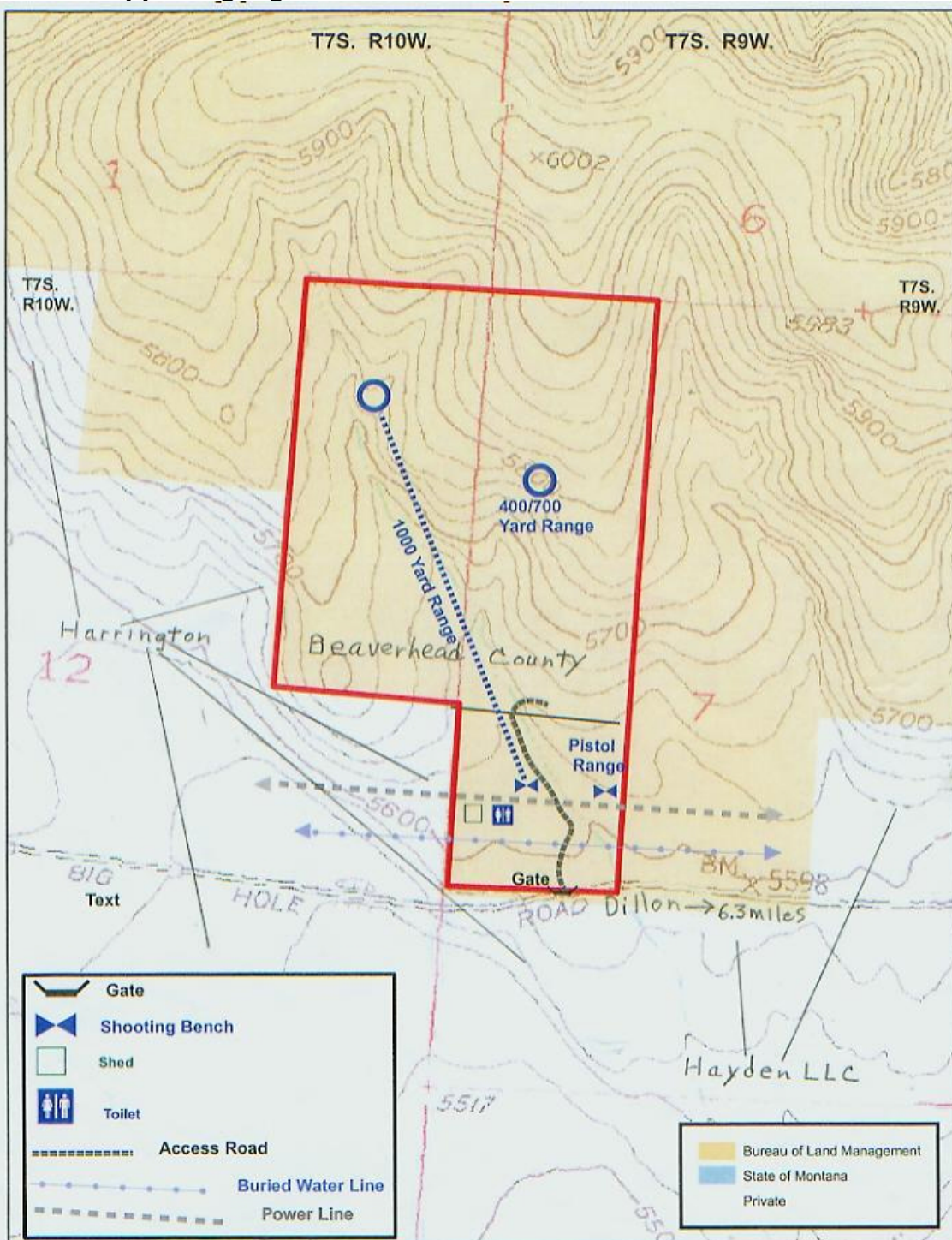


Figure 1 – Dillon Rifle & Pistol Club Area Map with surrounding land ownership.

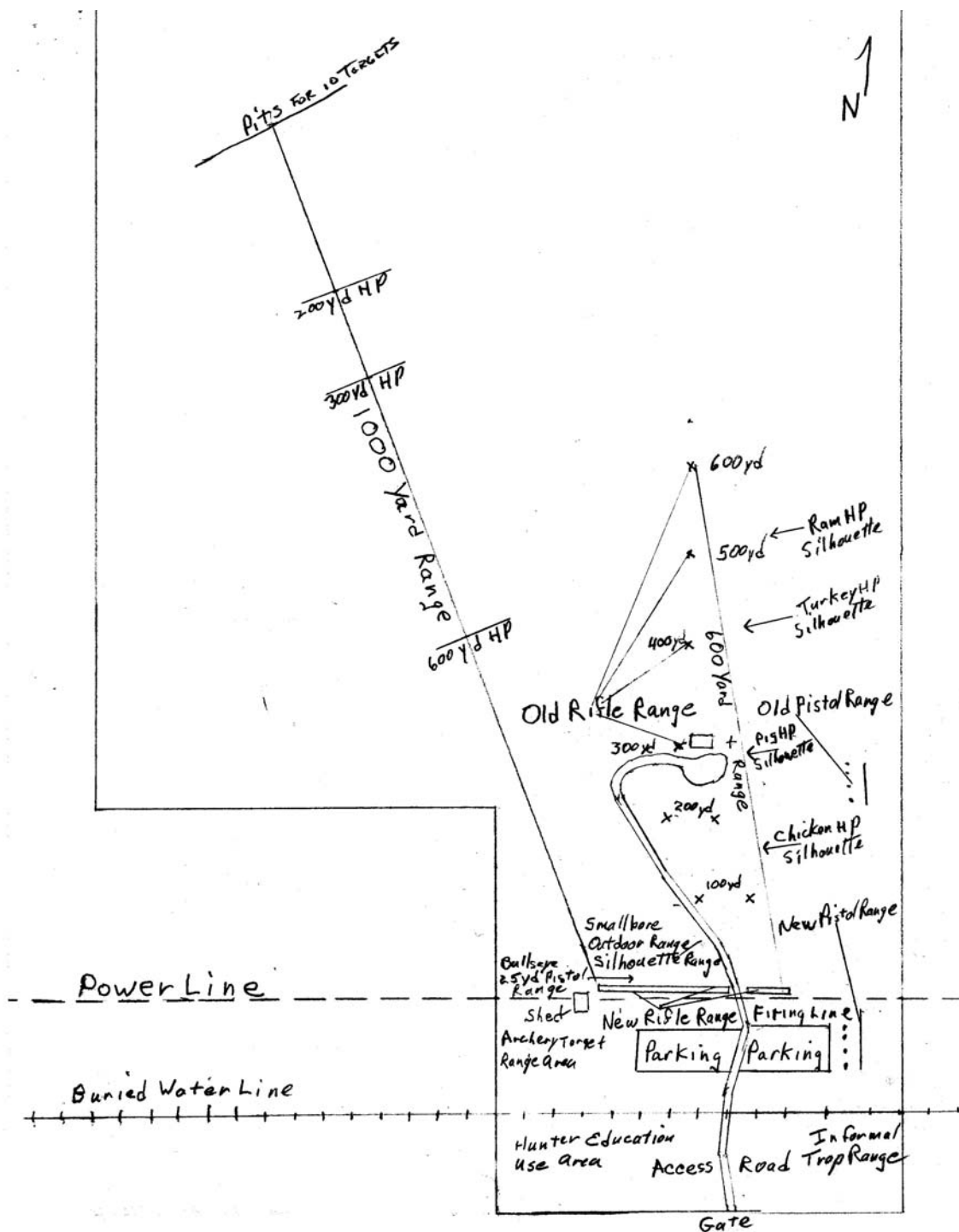


Figure 2 – Proposed range expansions for the Dillon Rifle & Pistol Club.

8. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected:

The leased area for the ranges is 169.71 acres, with improvements safely spread out within the leased properties. (Figures 1 and 2).

9. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the proposed project):

The area affected is the existing Dillon Rifle and Pistol Club, which has been in place for 40 years. The area is in open rocky foothills along the southeastern flanks of the Pioneer Mountains, 6.3 miles northwest of Dillon, MT. The surrounding area ownership is mixed private and BLM property. The historic and present land uses are primarily livestock grazing and the existing shooting range. A buried, water line and an overhead power line are located within the project area and there are no active unpatented mining claims. The nearest residences are approximately one mile to the west and two miles to the east. The Beaverhead County Landfill is approximately 2 miles southwest of the proposed project area. Access to the range is on the Ten Mile Road (See Figure 1).

10. Description of Project:

The general range expansion and improvement project is to build, modify or expand former and new ranges, add a vault toilet and a new parking area, while insuring that all activity areas are more handicapped accessible (See paragraph 2). Request for FWP funding for proposed projects listed in paragraph 2 will require:

- Building spotter pits
- Fencing Pit area
- Excavation of firing lines and finish to final grade
- Pouring concrete slabs at firing lines
- Constructing additional shooting benches
- Covering benches
- Constructing retractable targets
- Moving existing storage building
- Installing a vault toilet
- Graveling the parking lot and access road

In Accordance With (IAW) contracts agreements with Fish, Wildlife & Parks, all projects are to be completed by June 30, 2009.

11. List any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency that has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:

(a) Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:

Agency Name	Permit
N/A	

Funding:**Agency Name****Funding Amount**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

\$30,207.00

12. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups:

The Dillon Rifle and Pistol club is a private range. Anyone can purchase an annual membership for sale at several business locations in Dillon. An annual Sight-In Day is offered during September of each year. Current club memberships average 225 per year and the current estimates are 1000 shooter day uses per year. After range expansion and improvements it is projected that range usage will double to 2000+ shooter day uses per year. Currently the range is used for National Rifle Association Personal Protection in the Home classes, Montana Youth Challenge classes, Montana Fish, and Wildlife & Parks personnel qualification trials. After range expansion it is anticipated that the range will also support 4-H classes, Boy Scouts Shooting Merit Badge classes, Dillon Junior Chamber of Commerce Little Shooters classes, South Western Montana YMCA youth shooting classes, and Hunter Education classes.

13. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement:

Proposed range improvements and safety enhancements had been discussed with BLM, the former leaser, and Beaverhead County. Additionally the proposals have been discussed within the membership of the club and with the associated project vendors and contractors. The BLM conducted an EIS prior to exchange of the property.

14. List of Agencies Consulted/Contacted During Preparation of the EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

15. Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:

John Hawkins, 234 S. California, Dillon, MT 59725 (406) 683-6851

16. Other Pertinent Information: The Dillon Rifle and Pistol Club property and range were formerly leased from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), but the property has subsequently been transferred to Beaverhead County, Montana under the criteria of the R&PP Act. The club now leases the range property from Beaverhead County; MT. Part of the transfer of this property to Beaverhead County, by the BLM included an Environmental Assessment (EA) in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). That EA number is MT-050-06-05 and was part of the Dillon Shooting Range R&PP Patent Application.

Beaverhead County Commissioners approved the proposed range expansions and improvements and submitted written approval for the Dillon rifle and Pistol Club's application for the Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Shooting Range Grant on April 22, 2008.

Shooting range applications require the participant's governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range funding assistance. Resolution Date: January 28, 2008

Proposed future expansion for 2011 is to build a new indoor multi-purpose indoor range for air rifle, small bore rifle and archery, but is not funded in this cycle. That project is considered in this EA only to insure that it will be permissible under MEPA and that the current range layout leaves room to accommodate future expansion with the programmed indoor range. However, acceptance of this EA is not a guarantee that the planned indoor range will necessarily be funded in future Shooting Sports Grant program cycles. Funding requests for the indoor range will have to compete at the appropriate time, with any other application for grant money during that cycle.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Abbreviated Checklist – The degree and intensity determines extent of Environmental Review. An abbreviated checklist may be used for those projects that are not complex, controversial, or are not in environmental sensitive areas)

Table 1. Potential impact on physical environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources				X		
2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats				X		#2
3. Introduction of new species into an area				X		
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality				X		
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				X		#5
6. Existing water right or reservation				X		
7. Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture				X		
8. Air quality or objectionable odors				X		
9. Historical & archaeological sites				X		#9
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				X		
11. Aesthetics				X		

Comments (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

2. & 5. There are neither delineated wetlands nor perennial streams, and the water table is estimated to be deep. A small drainage bisects the range area from the northwest where the proposed safety buffer and expansion area would be located (BLM EA, MT-050-06-05).

9. No significant sites were documented in the BLM's EA, MT-050-06-05 (?)

Table 2. Potential impacts on human environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Social structures and cultural diversity				X		
2. Changes in existing public benefits provided by wildlife populations and/or habitat				X		
3. Local and state tax base and tax revenue				X		
4. Agricultural production				X		#4
5. Human health				X		#5
6. Quantity & distribution of community & personal income				X		
7. Access to & quality of recreational activities				X		#7
8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances)				X		#8
9. Distribution & density of population and housing				X		#9
10. Demands for government services				X		
11. Industrial and/or commercial activity				X		

Comments (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

4. The surrounding land ownership is mixed private and BLM. Historic and present land uses are primarily livestock grazing and the existing shooting range.

5. Range site plans, construction and the ongoing operational and maintenance plans meet the standards of safety for the range participants and the public at large. Range design and safety follow NRA's guidelines. The calculation of the safety buffer for the proposed 1,000-yard rifle range was the primary factor in determining the additional acreage added to the land transferred from BLM to Beaverhead County (BLM EA, MT-050-06-05).

7. Range will provide year round controlled access and fulfils a need for a range to accommodate law enforcement training, hunter education, and public shooting. Additional ranges and the shooting sports building will offer additional shooting opportunities and training.

8. Lead management practices are implemented by the county through a Four Step approach Plan to include 1) Control and containment of lead bullets 2) Prevention of lead migration 3) Removal of lead accumulations from the range, and 4) Documentation of activities and maintenance of records (BLM EA, MT-050-06-05).

9. The nearest residences area bout one mile to the west and two miles to the east. Orientations of proposed ranges are away from these areas.

Part III. Environmental Consequences

Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur? NO

Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant? This proposed action has no impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant. Cumulative impacts have been assessed considering any incremental impact of the proposed action when they are combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, and no significant impacts or substantially controversial issues were found. There are no extreme hazards created with this project and there are no conflicts with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan.

Identification of the Preferred Alternatives:

The proposed alternative A, alternative B and the no action alternative were considered.

- **Alternative A (Proposed Alternative)** is as described in paragraph 10 (Description of Project) An overall range expansion and improvement project is to build, modify or expand former and new ranges, add a vault toilet and a new parking area while insuring handicapped access.
- **Alternative B (No Action Alternative)** Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Shooting Sports Grant money would be denied and the area will remain as an active rifle & pistol range without proposed expansion and improvements.

Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented: Two alternatives have been considered, **A** (Proposed Alternative) and **B** (No Action Alternative). There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available, nor prudent.

Neither the proposed alternative (**A**) nor the no action alternative (**B**) would have any significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

- There are beneficial consequences to Acceptance of the **Proposed Alternative (A)** increasing shooting sports opportunities in the Dillon are through an overall range expansion and improvement project, building, modifying or expanding former and new ranges, adding a vault toilet and a new parking area while insuring handicapped access.
- The **No Action Alternative (B)** would be not to expand the range with additional shooting opportunities and not make improvements to accommodate handicapped shooters and provide no additional parking, and to continue on with present shooting activities and facilities. Land use would remain the same. Present activities include rifle and pistol ranges without the proposed improvements to the operations. Therefore the proposed alternative is the prudent alternative.

Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:

NONE

List and explain proposed mitigative measures (stipulations):

NONE

Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA:

John Hawkins, 234 S. California, Dillon, MT 59725

PART IV NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

All of the pertinent or potential impacts of the project have been reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. None of the project reviewed were complex, controversial, or located in an environmentally sensitive area. The projects being proposed are on properties leased from Beaverhead County by the Dillon Rifle and Pistol Club. The low impact activities proposed, the increased recreational opportunity, and the NEPA EA completed by BLM in 2006 all indicate that this should be considered the final version of the environmental assessment. There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative (**A**). The 40 year history of the Dillon Rifle and Pistol Club providing shooting opportunities to its members and the public indicates support for the proposed alternative. Therefore, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the proposed alternative (**A**) for the modernization and expansion proposals outlined in Para. 2 & 10.

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Helena, MT 59602

Date Completed: June 22, 2008

Date Revised: July 2, 2008

PART IV. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:

None required.

Describe public involvement, if any:

Announcement for EA comment will be published in the Dillon Tribune and on the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks website to allow an opportunity for public review. Additionally the EA will be available for review on the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks website.